

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, the Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thoughtful examination, allowance of claims 9, 11-13, 15, 17, 18, 24, 37-39 and 49, indication of allowability of claims 20-22 and 34-36, and the telephone interview of January 7, 2008.

Claims 19, 23, 25, 27-33, 35 and 40-48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Nakai et al. ("Nakai"). Claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Nakai in view of Ishiharada.

By the present amendment, claims 19 and 33 have been amended. No other claims have been added, amended or cancelled.

As discussed at the January 7 interview, Applicants' response of February 26, 2007 amended claim 25 as follows: "a metal-plating ~~applied to~~ in contact with the optical fiber having at least a portion of the cover substantially removed thereby providing a metal-plated optical fiber." Although Applicants' response of June 29, 2007 did not amend the noted language of claim 25, it appears that the earlier added "in contact with" was omitted due to typographical error. The language was included in claim 25 in Applicants' response of November 14, 2007.

Under these circumstances, agreement was reached at the interview that the "in contact with" language of claim 25 was part of the claim before final action and thus did not raise new issues that would require further search. The Examiner agreed to reconsider the rejection of claim 25 on this basis. The Examiner also agreed to accept and enter amendments to claims 19 and 33 that similarly recite that the metal is in contact with the exposed fibers. Claims 19 and 33 have been amended herein consistent with the same.

Applicants submit that the noted language of claims 19, 25 and 33 render these claims patentably distinct from Nakai, in which the metal is separated from the exposed fibers L2 by an

epoxy. There is no metal or metal plating in contact with the exposed optical fibers of Nakai as recited in any of claims 19, 25 and/or 33.

Accordingly, independent claims 19, 25 and 33 are patentably distinct over the applied art. Similarly, the remaining dependent claims are patentably distinct over the applied prior art for at least the reasons discussed with respect to the independent claims. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the same are therefore requested.

In view of the foregoing, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any missing or insufficient fee(s) or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-4293 (Case No. 12492.0276).

Respectfully submitted,



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